



# May 2010 Update for District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues



The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), established the District Contacts for Paraprofessional Issues to disseminate information of importance to paraprofessionals and their supervisors.

## COMPASS Training for Paraprofessionals

*Please join us for 3 hours each of*

**MATH**

**READING**



### Dates:

**Reading** Monday, May 3, 2010

**Math** Wednesday, May 12, 2010

**Time:** 3:45 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

**Location:** CREC Central  
111 Charter Oak Avenue  
Hartford, CT

**Cost:** \$30 per session

For registration **information** please contact Jeanne Szewczak at 860-524-4022 or [jszewczak@crec.org](mailto:jszewczak@crec.org).



### Save the Date!

**October 26, 2010**

***SERC's 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide  
Paraprofessionals as Partners  
Conference***

### Dynamic Duos:

***The Paraprofessional/Teacher  
Partnership***

*If you have any questions regarding  
this conference, feel free to contact  
**Stefanie Carbone, Consultant at***

## **District Spotlight: Putnam Public Schools**

***Jill Keith, Director of Special Education, Putnam Public Schools***

The Putnam Public Schools provides professional development to all of its certified and non-certified instructional staff throughout the year. During the opening days of the 2009-2010 school year, the district's paraprofessionals were provided with individual copies of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) 2008 Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21. Our paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers completed a self-assessment of their competencies to determine their skill level (I, II, or III) and created ways to support and develop talents across staff throughout the year. Methods of communication were implemented to ensure paraprofessionals received district communication. Efforts to build and reinforce the importance and effectiveness of paraprofessionals in the educational process by assigning them to effective, research-based roles has been ongoing. District-level, systemic improvements have been developed in response to the important feedback paraprofessionals have offered during provided Q & A sessions. Research on effective practices have been shared between paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers throughout the year.

On January 4 and 5, 2010, the Putnam Public Schools hosted Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) COMPASS paraprofessional training. As a "train the trainer" model of evidence-based practices aligned with the national paraprofessional standards, this was an excellent initiative to fund through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) monies. Three administrators from two districts and three paraprofessionals from Putnam were trained in the five basic modules and one advanced module. Donna Morelli was a very effective presenter and the team felt confident in its ability to present the modules as a result, which started in Putnam the following day!

Putnam's goal is to provide training in all Basic and select Advanced Level modules to every paraprofessional as part of a process to ensure each attains and maintains Level II and Level III competencies. Periodically and upon completion of the modules, paraprofessionals are engaged in pertinent, individually designed, district-sponsored Professional Development (PD) with their supervising teachers to achieve specific performance objectives aligned with school and district goals.

We wish to thank our staff and the CSDE for support of this initiative.

For more information regarding Putnam's Professional Development Program for Paraprofessionals, please contact Jill Keith, Director of Special Education, Putnam School District, at [keithj@putnam.k12.ct.us](mailto:keithj@putnam.k12.ct.us).

**The CSDE along with the State Education Resource Center (SERC) has finalized a frequently asked questions document to answer common questions that educators have regarding paraprofessionals. In each update, we will include one question and its answer. The full document can be downloaded from the CSDE Paraprofessional Information and Resources page at: [www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali](http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali).**

**What is the Parapro Assessment? What does it cost? When is it offered?**

The Parapro Assessment is a test for paraprofessionals developed by the **Educational Testing Service (ETS)** that can be used by states and school districts to comply with the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**. Testing is one of three options for qualifying paraprofessionals according to the law. The other two are possession of an Associate's degree (or higher) or two years of college/university coursework. The cost is \$45. More information regarding this assessment can be found on the ETS Web site at: [www.ets.org/parapro](http://www.ets.org/parapro).



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In 2007, the State Education Resource Center (SERC), with assistance from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), developed the **Teacher Supervisory Checklist (TSC)**, which is based on the Connecticut *Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals Working with Students Birth to 21 (2007)*, is an informal assessment of the knowledge and skills competencies of teacher as supervisor within a school or program. Prior to utilizing the TSC, the user should be very familiar with Connecticut's *Guidelines*; all of the standards in this document come from the Guidelines. This checklist is not an evaluation or a judgment of the teacher as supervisor of the performance of the teacher as supervisor; it is a means of identifying, enhancing, and articulating the knowledge competencies and skills of the teacher as supervisor for use by the teacher, paraprofessional, and administrator.

Suggested uses of the Teacher Supervisory Checklist:

1. Self-assessment tool for individual teacher supervisors of paraprofessionals.
2. Collaborative informal assessment between a paraprofessionals and teacher supervisor.
3. Needs assessment regarding teacher supervisors of paraprofessionals in a school or district.
4. Guide in the design of professional development for teacher supervisors of paraprofessionals.

This document is available for download from the CSDE Paraprofessional Information and Resources page at: [www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali](http://www.ct.gov/sde/para-cali).

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## The Principal's Role

The principal and other school administrators are critical to the success of instructional teams. The principal takes the leadership role in creating a school climate in which paraprofessionals have a professional identity and contribute to activities that help to enhance student achievement. Even though teachers are responsible for the day-to-day instructional supervision of paraprofessionals, principals are responsible for the administrative supervision that includes the hiring, preparation, evaluation and dismissal of paraprofessionals. The following checklists will serve as a guide for administrators who want to improve the effectiveness of paraprofessionals and the teachers who direct their work.

The principal and/or other school administrator have the primary responsibility for:

- Recruiting, interviewing and hiring paraprofessionals.
- Assigning paraprofessionals to specific programs, teachers, classrooms or educational teams.
- Developing appropriate job descriptions.
- Developing appropriate policies for the employment, training and supervision of paraprofessionals.
- Evaluating paraprofessionals and their supervising teachers.
- Promoting effective teamwork in the building and within teacher-paraprofessionals teams.
- Providing professional development opportunities for paraprofessionals and those who supervise them.

Pacific Training Associates 2009, Seattle Washington

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